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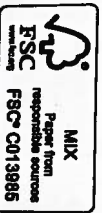
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Social Movement Partyism and the Tea Party's Rapid Mobilization

Paul Almeida and Nella Van Dyke¹

The Tea Party movement in the United States emerged as a potent force on the political landscape within a brief 18-month period. The conservative movement surfaced nationally convening rallies and demonstrations in dozens of American cities by Tax Day (April 15) in 2009 (Rafaili et al. 2011). The movement continued to gain momentum through the summer of 2009 as it mobilized against the Democratic Party's health care reform program. In the movement's early days, many in the mass media and the Democratic Party leadership labeled the Tea Party protests "astroturf," as opposed to grassroots, due to the heavy involvement of the Republican Party and associated think tanks in their mobilization. Journalists like Rachel Maddow exposed how Tea Party protests have been promoted and sponsored by Republican Party operatives. The involvement of the Republican Party in public protest actions is a fairly unique phenomenon. In fact, official Republican Party participation in protest actions has been virtually absent from the social movement landscape in the United States for almost 40 years, with the exception of anti-abortion protests in some parts of the country such as annual rallies in Washington DC. In this chapter, we use the tools of social movement scholarship to explore Republican Party involvement in the movement and its contribution to the movement's mobilization. In particular, we draw from studies that examine the multiple contributing roles political parties play in facilitating large-scale collective action.

We argue here that this mobilization reflects an instance of *social movement partyism*, a situation in which an oppositional political party manifests behavior similar to what we characterize as social movement action (Almeida 2006, 2010)—that is, organizing collective action outside of more institutionalized political settings, such as rallies, marches, and street protests (Snow et al. 2004). The term is akin to "social movement unionism" whereby labor unions alter their more conservative collective bargaining approach to resolving labor issues to organize social movement-type campaigns (Johnston 1994, Turner and Hurd 2001, Van Dyke et al. 2007). In the case of social movement partyism, the political party instead of the labor union behaves as a social movement. We would like to

¹ The authors contributed equally to this chapter, names are listed in alphabetical order.

useful in understanding the rapid emergence of the Tea Party on a national scale:

1. Interests and motivations for an oppositional party to use social movement-type strategies.
2. Rapid and extensive mobilization using oppositional party resources—or why we should be especially interested when a political party behaves like a social movement.

While political parties would not advocate protest mobilization unless they see a benefit to extra-institutional grassroots mobilization, their reasons for doing so may vary. No matter what their motivation, however, parties possess a variety of resources that may be beneficial to a social movement. In the following pages, we explore how the theory of social movement partyism helps explain the rapid emergence of the Tea Party movement and Republican involvement in it, as well as the implications the movement has for social movement theory.

Social Movement Partyism: Interests and Motivations

Much has been written about the external allies of social movements and why actors inside the state may be especially beneficial, including McCarthy and Wolfson's study of the channeling of social movements by the state (1992), Santoro and McGuire's work on "Institutional Activists" (1997), Banaszak's recent work on the women's movement and "state-movement intersections" (2005, 2010), research on state actor–social movement coalitions (Stearns and Almeida 2004), Jack Goldstone's writing on the blurring of state and nonstate actors (2003), as well as Ron Aminzade's studies of nineteenth-century French political parties (1995). However, we know much less about why institutionalized entities such as political parties would seek out a social movement form of political participation. We believe this is a very different question to address in the literature on social movements and elite allies—why the elite ally—in this case a national political party—would itself take on the characteristics of a social movement? Much more research exists on how a social movement develops into or becomes incorporated within a political party (Snow et al. 2004, Van Cott 2005) than on why an institutionalized party begins engaging in social movement-type tactics.

We should note from the outset that we are not suggesting that involvement in Tea Party protest has been an official tactic of the national Republican Party. As Bailey and colleagues note, "The Tea Party is an organized interest or movement associated with the Republican Party, but not the same as the Republican Party."

2 A cautionary note is acknowledged here in that we want to recognize that the Tea Party movement is composed not only of GOP sympathizers, but also of independents, libertarians, disaffected Democrats, and a variety of other conservative forces.

(2012: 771). As we will show here, Republican Party members, women, and operatives have been highly involved in the Tea Party, but we are not suggesting that the Republican Party establishment has embraced the Tea Party, nor that the Tea Party embraced the Republican establishment. On the contrary, some Tea Party activists "have expressed disdain for most existing GOP organizations and 'establishment Republicans.'" (Skoopol and Williamson 2012). That said, the evidence suggests that elements of the Republican Party immediately embraced the Tea Party movement and become involved as members, donors, or supporters, in what Skoopol and Williamson call "a scramble for the head and heart of the Republican Party" (2012: 100). Thus the question remains, why would a political party, or at least elements of it, become involved in social protest?

One possibility is that social movement tactics have become so widespread that any group, whether they be political insiders or outsiders, will now use them. Meyer and Tarrow (1998) advance this idea of a social movement society in their work, including a piece by Meyer in this volume. They suggest that protest has become more widespread in contemporary society and that wide-ranging and diverse constituencies now engage in protest activity. Further, they argue that the professionalization and institutionalization of social movements has made the social movements a part of the standard, institutionalized political system. The social movement society thesis suggests that Republican Party insiders are using movement tactics because these actions are so standard and usual now that any group might use them. Protest activity is now largely inseparable from more standard tactics within the institutional political world. While it is hard to argue with these hypotheses, we think that the Tea Party case requires explanation beyond movement society theory. Why did Republican Party operatives decide that 2009 was the time to turn to protest tactics, rather than at some other time in the last 20 years? The answer to this query requires considering the political climate of the time.

In earlier work, one of this chapter's authors documented the rise of social movement partyism in Latin America (Almeida 2006, 2010). In the Latin American cases of Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Uruguay, social movement partyism occurred after oppositional social movements had mobilized for many years, won electoral victories, and become officially recognized political parties. These former social movement political parties, while engaging in institutional political action, also continued to participate in social protest mobilization and action in the 1990s and 2000s. For these groups, participation in non-institutional social activism reflected a continuation of political action strategies they had been engaging in for years. As Tilly (1978) notes, past action and habits of action often shape a group's repertoires of action. After becoming recognized political parties, these groups turned to protest mobilization in response to economic austerity programs being threatened by the party in power, policies that would privatize water rights, medical care, and other social service programs and infrastructure.

protections for the middle and working classes of Latin America. In many of the countries where social movement partyism surfaced there was a network overlap of double affiliation (Diani 1995) whereby key activists simultaneously belonged to social movement-type organizations such as a labor union or an agricultural cooperative and to a political party. This double affiliation provided the skeletal structure to build the broader alliance between social movements and opposition political parties. For example, labor militants in Nicaragua's public sector unions also served as parliamentary representatives in the national legislature for the Sandinista political party. In Ecuador, leaders of indigenous peoples' organizations also served as representatives in the Patchakurik political party while major representatives of coca farmer associations in Bolivia ran for local and national office under the banner of the MAS political party. This particular pathway of organizing like (and with) social movements partially explains the electoral success of left-of-center political parties in Latin America or the so called "pink tide" (Almeida 2010).

The US Tea Party case bears some similarities and deviations from the Latin American cases, and provides us with the opportunity to further develop the theory of social movement partyism. Unlike the left-of-center political parties, which continued participating in movement protest after they became political parties, the Republican Party in the US has existed for over 150 years as a political party. Thus, it is not engaging in its usual and traditional form of political action when it turns to social protest. On the contrary, mobilizing people for social protest is something we would not expect to see from an established political party. Social movement theory tells us that informal organizations are more likely to mobilize people for disruptive collective action and that professional organizations with a paid staff typically confine their action to more conventional "insider" tactics (Staggenborg 1988). Although scholars such as Minkoff (1999) remind us that the organizational types that engage in social protest are varied, ranging from advocacy organizations to more radical movement organizations, little research examines political party involvement in protest mobilization. Thus, this case presents us with the opportunity to contribute to social movement theory by considering the conditions under which an institutional political actor turns to non-institutional action.

Republicans at the Tea Party

Journalists have documented widespread Republican involvement in the Tea Party movement. The Tea Party Express and Tea Party Patriots, the most well-known national Tea Party organizations, both have ties to the Republican Party. The Tea Party Express was formed by a Republican political action committee "Our Country Deserves Better." The Tea Party Patriots was formed by an organization called FreedomWorks, founded by ex-Republican Congressman Dick Armey, the former House majority leader. Dick Armey's other recent employment involved

clients include a number of pharmaceutical and health care industry (Maddow 2009). Thus, it is not surprising that FreedomWorks might sponsor mobilization against the Democrats' health care initiative. FreedomWorks' President is Matt Kibbe, the former senior economist for the Republican National Committee. Before that, he was chief of staff for Republican Congressman Dan Miller of Florida. The fact that the two national Tea Party organizations have direct ties and received their funding from Republican-connected organizations illustrates the influential connections between the party and movement.

Although individual Tea Party activists and local Tea Party groups are not necessarily directly affiliated with the two large national organizations, many local organizations have received support, both financial and otherwise, from the Republican-funded national organizations. In their case study of a Boston area Tea Party group, Williamson and her colleagues (2011) describe multiple connections between the group and the big national organizations. In April 2010, the Tea Party Express came to a Tax Day protest organized by the Boston group, providing a great deal of publicity to the action. Group members receive training in grassroots organizing from the Koch-funded group American Majority. The Boston group is registered as an affiliate on the Tea Party Patriots website. Thus, this local organization receives several forms of support from the national groups of the Tea Party-Republican nexus.

In another local example, one of the authors of this chapter observed a Tea Party rally in College Station, Texas in October 2009. Local Texas Tea Party chapters organized the event in protest of President Barack Obama's keynote address at ex-President George H. W. Bush's "Points of Light" Conference on volunteering in America (see Patel 2009). Four out of five of the tables set up at the event represented a chapter of the Republican Party. They included Texas A&M College Republicans, Brazos County Young Republicans, Republican Party of Brazos County, and Hands Off Texas (a state-wide Republican organization). The fifth table at the event was a very small stand set up by the Lyndon Larouche PAC (LaRouchePAC) and manned by a single person.

The Brazos County Young Republicans hung a large "register to vote" banner in front of their table. Hands Off Texas was created in September 2009 with the explicit goals of capturing Republican majorities in national and Texan congressional elections in 2010 as well as reclaiming the White House in 2012 (<http://www.handsofftexas.com/>). Between 500 and 1,000 people attended this Tea Party rally (see Figure 3.1). Local Republican organizations sponsored the event and appear to have focused their efforts during this activity on mobilizing votes for the midterm elections. The Tea Party protest of a summit exalting civic engagement and volunteerism provides another instance of social movement partyism—local Republican chapters organizing a protest rally to attract votes for the upcoming electoral cycle.

The Press has uncovered the presence of Republican operatives as protesters at town hall meetings held in 2009 by many members of Congress to discuss



Figure 3.1 College Station, TX, Tea Party rally, October 16, 2009

the proposed health care legislation and other topics. For example, a woman who claimed to be politically unaffiliated challenged Wisconsin Representative Steve Kagen, a Democrat, on health care at a town hall meeting in early August. However, a local TV station discovered later that she was a former Republican staffer who had worked for Mr. Kagen's opponent in his Congressional race (Stolberg 2009). Republican Party members and affiliated media commentators have all encouraged these mobilizations, including Fox News and its promotion of the Tea Party events on tax day 2009. Republican politicians have spoken at many Tea Party events, and many have claimed an affiliation with the movement.

Inside the State

In July 2010, as politicians prepared for November's Congressional elections, Michele Bachmann, Republican Representative from Minnesota, started a Tea Party Political Caucus in Congress. The Caucus immediately included 28 members. One hundred thirty-eight candidates ran as Tea Party candidates in the election, all of them registered as Republicans (44 enjoyed a victory) (*New York Times* 2010). Just prior to the November 2012 election, the Tea Party Caucus boasted 60 members (Tea Party Caucus 2012). Although not all Tea Party activists supported the formation of the Caucus, on the grounds that it presented the threat of cooptation

the Tea Party (Vogel 2010), the Caucus and Tea Party activists have nonetheless maintained close ties. For example, in May of 2012, the Caucus held a symposium on the economy and American Dream featuring former Republican Presidential candidate Herman Cain. Attendees included members from TeaParty.net, the Tea Party Patriots and Tea Party Express (teapartycaucus-bachmann.house.gov 2012). Tea Party activists are frequent guests at events held by the Caucus.

Thus, there is significant evidence of close ties between the Republican Party and the Tea Party. While Republicans have been involved in other mobilizations in recent history, including mobilization against abortion and against the civil rights movement, Republican Party participation is rarely as direct or explicit as it has been with the Tea Party. As noted earlier, the Republican establishment has not necessarily backed the Tea Party, but instead support has come from more extremist or fringe Republicans who had long sought to have more influence within the Party (Skocpol and Williamson 2012). Why then has at least some faction of the Republican Party involved itself in a grassroots social movement at this point in time? The Tea Party movement in the US and Republican sponsorship and involvement occurred only after the Republican Party had lost a significant amount of institutional political power. In the 2008 election, the Republican Party lost control of both the White House and the House of Representatives, and conservatives faced a political system dominated by the Democratic Party to an extent not seen since 1993. Thus, following the 2006 and 2008 Congressional and Presidential elections, the Republican Party became more of an oppositional party. Public opinion polls showed declining support of the Afghan and Iraq occupations pushed aggressively by the Bush administration. At the same time, by late 2008 the economic crisis had arrived in full force with hundreds of thousands of Americans losing their source of employment and/or their homes via the foreclosure crisis. The Republican Party found itself in dire need of rejuvenating its base of support and overall credibility. In addition, Theda Skocpol and her colleagues argue that longtime Republican funders had been looking for a way to connect to the grassroots and mobilize the grassroots around their agenda (Williamson et al. 2011, Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

Opposition parties need to develop mechanisms to increase their electoral strength in future elections and weaken the dominant party in power (Stearns and Almeida 2004). By creating media events with social movement-type rallies, the opposition party can raise issues and attempt to bring public opinion on its side. Polling data suggests that a majority of Americans were aware of the Tea Party's existence by mid-2010 (about three-fourths of Americans had heard about the Tea Party movement and formed a positive or negative attitude)—that is, the Tea Party made itself known within US public opinion in a little over one year through the use of large protest events and the disruption of political meetings such as the town hall meetings held by Democratic members of Congress (Pew Research Center 2010).

The movement has effectively mobilized people by socially constructing the "threat" of rights erosion, big government, and tax increases. In Charles Tilly's

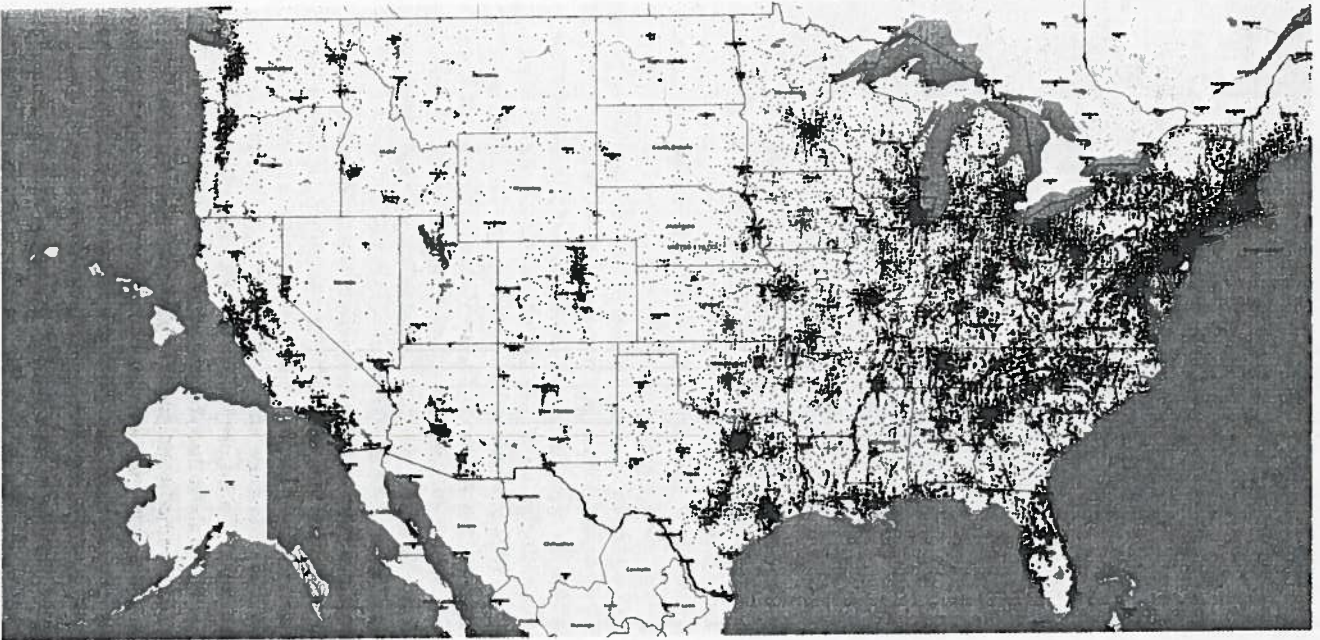


Figure 3.2 Tea party membership, June 2010. By permission of the Institute for Research and Education of Human Rights (www.irehr.org)

(1978), he predicted that action motivated by collective threats would lead to more rapid mobilization than that motivated by opportunities because people respond to loss more dramatically than they do to new advantages. The Tea Party appears to socially construct and emphasize threats purportedly presented by the Obama administration (e.g., government takeover of private firms, deficit spending, socialized medicine, etc.) more than it does opportunities for action and influence (e.g., now we have the opportunity for change, allies are ready to help, etc.). However, structural opportunities such as town hall meeting venues do provide institutional access and proximity to political elites to express grievances (Tarrow 1994). And, as Skocpol and Williamson (2012) point out, the movement and more extremist Republicans faced opportunities in the wake of the failed Bush Presidency, when the Republican establishment was in no position to determine what happened next. So concepts of both threat and opportunity serve especially well in research on Tea Party emergence and sustained mobilization. An especially interesting avenue for research is to analyze how such a movement actively constructs its own cognitive scheme around threats—in terms of stories and narrative (Polletta 2006).

Rapid and Extensive Mobilization

The most impressive part of the Tea Party in our view is its rapid growth in the political landscape beginning on Tax Day, April 15, 2009 (as well as its ability to take up several political issues such as tax reform, government spending, health care, and immigration). By June 2010, just over one year after the movement's emergence, it enjoyed widespread membership across the United States (Figure 3.2).

In this dimension, rapid and sustained mobilization, we believe there is room to make further contributions to resource mobilization theory. A specific focus on the unique and rich assets of a national political party is critical. Social movement scholars have documented the crucial role that resources can play in mobilization (McCarthy and Zald 1977, Morris 1981, Cress and Snow 1996, 2000). As Cress and Snow (1996) suggest, these resources range from leadership and office space to moral support. However, little research considers the resources that political parties may bring to a movement.

Polity members, such as national political parties, enjoy an enormous amount of structural power and resources. Not just in the United States, but in many parts of the world, traditional mobilizing structures, such as labor unions, religious institutions, and so on, may be weakening (of course we want to be cautious here in terms of world regions when making such claims). Political parties, especially in democratic nations, remain one of the most important unified national organizations in existence (Almeida 2010) and possess a vast array of resources. In fact, they possess all of the resources that have been suggested as important to social movement success, including cultural, social-organizational, human and

the potential to provide all of these forms of resources to mobilization:

1. **Material.** Political parties have access to stockpiles of liquid capital which are extremely fungible and mobile. This financing is provided by corporations, wealthy individuals, and PACs.
2. **Social-organizational.** Political party voting records present a vast potential membership database and a bureaucratic structure that is organized in every county and perhaps zip code in the United States.
3. **Cultural.** Political parties have media allies, media allies, and media access (including print media, electronic Listserve, websites, blogs, but probably more important, talk radio and television).
4. **Human.** Political party activists are already accustomed to mobilizing massive numbers of people for electoral campaigns; these skills can easily be transferred to social movement-type rallies and easily "spillover" (Meyer and Whittier 1994, Whittier 2004).

Let us consider each of these resources in turn and how they have facilitated this rapid mobilization.

Material

FreedomWorks, the Republican-affiliated organization described previously, received a \$1 million donation from an anonymous source, which some have linked to Republican financiers the Koch brothers (Mayer 2010, Fenn 2011). The donation was given for the express purpose of aiding in the mobilization of the Tea Party. Funds from this source were used to found the Tea Party Patriots and set up its website, which acts as a resource for local activists. A number of other Republican-affiliated organizations, including Americans for Prosperity, a Republican-affiliated think tank, and the Republican PAC, Our Country Deserves Better, have used their financial resources to support the Tea Party. It is extremely unusual for a social movement to have available funds of this magnitude even as it is just beginning to mobilize (or at any time, for that matter). For further discussion of the resources provided by Republican-affiliated individuals or organizations, see Chapter 2 in this volume by Fetner and King.

Social Organizational

Political parties possess a social organization whose geographic reach and thoroughness is, arguably, unmatched by any social organization in the country. Every voting precinct in the country has a named Party Chairman (unless the position is vacant), and voter registration records are publicly available. The explicit support of the Tea Party provided by the Republicans made the use of Republican voter registration lists a logical mobilizing tool for Tea Party activists.

those who identify as Independents are Republican-leaning (Civarese et al. 2010, Quinniac 2010, Zernike and Thee-Brenan 2010, Abramowitz 2011). There is some evidence that the Tea Party made use of the Republican Party's social reach in its mobilization. For example, Williamson and her colleagues (2011) describe how Tea Party activists in Brockton, MA, created a contact list of Republican Party members from voter registration records. Another example, described earlier, is the Tea Party protest on a college campus that included official representation from four different Republican organizations. While these are only examples, there is little question, given the movement's membership base, that the Republican organizational structure has aided the Tea Party movement.

Cultural

The emergence of Fox News on the Cable News scene represents a dramatic departure from conventional news outlets. Fox News, many have argued, serves largely as a mouthpiece for the Republican Party. Journalist Rachel Maddow documents how many of the commentators offering their analysis of the Presidential race on Fox News were actually paid consultants for the Republican Mitt Romney campaign (Maddow 2012). Thus, it may come as no surprise that Fox News has been heavily involved in promoting Tea Party events and the movement's agenda. The Tea Party has received a tremendous boost from the national media, specifically Fox News. Williamson and her colleagues (2011) document the extensive news coverage received by Tea Party protests *prior* to their occurrence. Fox show hosts, including Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, Gretchen Van Susteren, and Neil Cavuto, all staged shows at Tea Party events, including the inaugural Tea Party rallies on tax day in 2009. The largest Tea Party event, held September 12, 2009 in Washington DC, was co-sponsored by Glenn Beck, at that time a Fox News host. Williamson et al. suggest that Fox News should be thought of as a social movement organization which provides both infrastructure and a sense of shared collective identity to Tea Party activists. They say, "Overall, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Fox News provides much of what the loosely interconnected Tea Party organizations otherwise lack in terms of a unified membership and communications infrastructure" (Williamson et al. 2011: 30).

Human

Political parties mobilize voters on a regular and routine basis. Party operatives have skills in framing issues to appeal to voters, preparing messages and talking points for the media, and mobilizing voters, all of which are useful and can be adapted for use in extra-institutional mobilization. At the national level, the two major Tea Party organizations are run by individuals with extensive experience in institutional, party politics. Thus, they come to the organizations with a great deal

over workshops and educational materials to anyone interested in using them, and there is anecdotal evidence that Tea Party organizations have made use of them. The Boston area Tea Party group studied by Williamson and colleagues encouraged members to attend training sponsored by Americans for Prosperity, a Republican-oriented think tank. In July 2010, Americans for Prosperity held a summit called Texas Defending the American Dream. Attended by 500 people, the forum served as a training session for the Tea Party movement (Mayer 2010). A longtime political operative in the employ of Americans for Prosperity spoke at the rally, saying "We love what the Tea Parties are doing, because that's how we're going to take back America!" In an interview with the *New Yorker*, she described how the Americans for Prosperity "help 'educate' Tea Party activists on policy details, and give them 'next-step training' after their rallies, so that their political energy could be channelled 'more effectively'" (Mayer 2010: 2). She also told the magazine that Americans for Prosperity had given Tea Party activists lists of elected officials to target. The organization also provides talking points to Tea Party activists, directions to protests, and "Tea Party finder" websites.

The Tea Party Patriots has a professionally run website (teaparty Patriots.org) where individuals can enter their zip code and be informed about local chapters in their area. The website also provides information on forming new chapters, and offers users the opportunity to connect with other activists in order to share information and support. The group sponsors a weekly conference call where it plans future events and provides support to local chapters. Thus, there are multiple Republican-affiliated or -funded organizations providing human capital resources to the Tea Party.

Conclusions

The Tea Party movement is remarkable in its rapid, national mobilization. It is also unique in the direct links between it and parts of the Republican Party. Social movement theory has much to offer our understanding of the Tea Party movement, while the Tea Party's unique features can assist scholarship by pushing existing research in new directions. These new arenas of research include the motivations that lead a political party to abandon solely institutionalized actions in legislatures and mobilize in the streets and the particular properties of political parties that can lead to rapid and widespread mobilization.

We have described how Republican involvement in the Tea Party was likely motivated by a number of factors, including a combination of political opportunities and threats. While the Republican Party enjoys a great deal of access to political power as well as financial resources, and thus opportunity, at the same time the Party had just experienced a massive electoral defeat, losing the White House as well as control over Congress. Public consternation over the federal economic bailout and the health reform bill, and a general dislike of President

with the ability to participate in a massive grassroots mobilization, and it was so. We suspect that social movement partyism typically occurs when a political party enjoys a combination of opportunities and threats. However, we would not suggest that all episodes of social movement partyism are exactly the same.

In Latin America, social movement parties also faced a combination of both opportunities and threats. The political system had opened up allowing oppositional movements to become a recognized part of the formal political system in the 1990s with the advent of the third wave of global democratization (Markoff 2006). Yet at the same time, domestic austerity and structural adjustment programs proposed by the party in power presented threats that inspired their turn to social movement action to resist. Thus, the US and Latin American cases both represent social movement partyism in an environment that presents opportunities, but where mobilization occurs in response to the threat of political and economic policies that are counter to the mobilizing group's goals. In both regions political parties engaged in social movement action in response to political and economic threats. A key difference between the two cases, however, is the extent to which the social movement tactics represented a new form of action on the part of the party—a disjuncture with their previous political repertoire. In the US case, social movement partyism reflects a profound shift in party tactics, whereas in the Latin American case it does not. Indeed, disruptive protest is an internal resource for poorly financed oppositional parties in Latin America, whereas the Tea Party relies heavily on elite external funding to sustain protest campaigns.

Another fundamental difference between Latin American anti-austerity mobilization and Tea Party protests resides in the social construction of threat. Austerity measures generally do punish the working class and marginalized populations in the city and countryside (Vreeland 2003). Hence, labor and community activists as well as oppositional political parties can anchor their mobilizing frames on the economic threats of austerity measures with experiential credibility (Snow and Benford 1988). The Tea Party activists and the Republican Party have largely postponed their threats as imminent and in the future in a more artificial fashion, whereby attempts at protecting the welfare state through taxation, government investment, and expanding public health care are portrayed as creeping socialism. The social construction of the threat by Tea Party mobilization is based less on experiential credibility and more on putative future threats. This may partially explain the weaker results of Tea Party candidates in the 2012 House and Senate elections. The alleged future threats may not be able to be sustained as a mobilizing mechanism unless they are eventually reinforced by actual events and outcomes suggested by the constructed ideological maps.

No matter what the social context, political parties provide an array of resources to social movements, including material, social organizational, cultural, and human resources. Whether the Tea Party movement could have mobilized as rapidly or with its large geographical reach without the array of resources provided by the Republican Party is questionable. A massive infusion of liquid

mobilization. Activists used Republican Party registration lists and webpages to recruit participants. The Fox News network provided an accessible cultural mouthpiece and explicitly recruited people for participation in Tea Party protests. An array of Republican-affiliated organizations provided training to local activists, as well as educational materials, talking points, and strategy suggestions for the movement. The availability of this array of resources is extremely unusual for social movements, and in part illustrates why social movement scholars need to pay attention to and theorize about the movement.

The long-term effect of Republican involvement in the Tea Party remains to be seen. Sociologist Theda Skocpol (Arlitaga 2012) argues that the movement has been largely co-opted by the Republican Party. And as this has happened the number of Tea Party organizations has dropped by 40 percent. Whether the movement will be completely incorporated into mainstream Republican Party politics or will remain an extra-institutional political force remains to be seen.

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